

PRESS RELEASE – LONG

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We, the **East Cowes Arts & Culture Group** having gained local support from the East Cowes Town Council, East Cowes Mayor, East Cowes Business Association, East Cowes Community Partnership, East Cowes Heritage Association, and Cllr. Karl Love IWC Councillor for East Cowes; along with ‘in principle’ support from our local MP Bob Seeley; are now looking for expressions of interest and support from the IWC and a wider group of stakeholders, which will enable us to initiate conversations’ with the V&A museum and other interested parties.

Whilst we fully support the building being utilised for employment it has been widely publicised that the marine industry currently housed there will be relocated to Kingston Marine Park. As part of the East Cowes Regeneration Project Team we have been informed that a long term business case for the building will need to be conducted. We firmly believe that this opportunity should be seriously considered and explored as a **viable, alternative option** in the event of any future proposals for **residential development** of the Columbine building.

THE V&A EAST COWES PROJECT PROPOSAL

We would like to propose for consideration, that the magnificent industrial Columbine Building on East Cowes historic waterfront, is used as an arts/cultural community resource as part of the **V&A museum group**.

This particular historic building has immense potential for use as a National / International gallery / museum, e.g. as a centre for design, culture, art, industry, education and events, as part of the **Medina Valley regeneration**.



This waterfront opportunity has recently become available due to Speculator withdrawal and now provides the East Cowes waterfront area with the **potential** to be developed as a culturally vibrant and attractive area for **inward investment** – opening up the area to the prospect for huge progressive regeneration.

Examples of successful similar projects in coastal communities include Tate St Ives, the newly opened Tate Dundee.

Since opening in 2011, Turner Contemporary Margate has welcomed more than 2.8 million visitors to the gallery, bringing world-class art to the area, offering unique learning opportunities, and putting over £67 million into the local economy. The gallery has drawn audiences from throughout the UK and the world, attracting thousands of British and international tourists, with 39% of visitors citing the Turner Contemporary as their motivation for visiting Margate.

(source: Turner Contemporary Gallery 13/7/18)



Turner Contemporary Gallery Margate



Aerial View of Columbine Building with Albany Barracks and potential development site to the left of the picture

There is further potential for a **landmark building** if additional space is required (or if the Columbine is utilised for permanent employment) due to the availability of land at Maresfield Road, adjacent to the Columbine site which could include a glazed link walkway to the locally listed **Victoria Barracks**.

We believe that this **prime waterfront opportunity** could bring huge **potential growth** to East Cowes and the Isle of Wight, not only through the arts, tourism and education; but as part of the Governments’ aim to move cultural experiences outside of London and major cities in order to attract high skilled businesses and turn around struggling coastal communities and economies.

QUOTE: "It has been announced that following successful lobbying by the **MP Bob Seely**, Isle of Wight arts organisations will now receive "**priority treatment**" from Arts Council of England (ACE) to "develop their potential".

<https://www.bobseely.org.uk/news/boost-isle-wight-arts-mp-secures-priority-treatment-arts-council>: May 2018

Response from MP Bob Seely:

"The announcement of the Island becoming a Priority Location for arts funding is really great news and I will now work with the many excellent organisations we have to develop plans to **maximise the potential** of the arts and museum scene. "I'm delighted that the numerous round tables with ACE and arts groups across the Island this last year has paid a handsome reward and I thank the arts council for this announcement. "I believe the Island's artistic heritage is currently under utilised and there is a **huge area of potential for the Isle of Wight** to develop and link up with other organisations like **London museums, theatres and galleries**. "Such work is **important for regeneration, education and the public good**, and it will increase the attraction for visitors who want to come to the Island."

WHY THE V&A?

The **Victoria and Albert Museum** was founded with a mission: to **educate designers, manufacturers and the public in art and design**. Its origins lie in the Great Exhibition of 1851 – the world's first international display of design and manufacturing. Following the Exhibition, its creator and champion, Prince Albert, saw the need to maintain and improve the standards of British industry to compete in the international marketplace. To this end, he urged that the profits of the Exhibition be used to develop a cultural district of museums and colleges in South Kensington **devoted to art and science education**. The Museum was the first of these institutions and was founded in 1852.



A new V&A gallery/museum in East Cowes seems an obvious choice not only because of the **historic links** as the location of Victoria and Albert's much loved home **Osborne House**, but also because of its original purpose of **celebrating design/industry and manufacturing** of which there is such a wealth of history in East Cowes/Cowes and the Medina Valley.

The Columbine building looks out across the mouth of the Medina River towards Cowes where there is historically an extremely important International British design/fashion industry connection to Queen Victoria and the V&A museum:

John Redfern set up his tailoring business in Cowes High Street in 1846 producing high class haute couture for wealthy patrons. In 1892 they had branches in London, Paris, Nice, Cannes, Aix le Bains, New York, Chicago, Newport Rhode Island, Edinburgh, Manchester and, of course, Cowes. In their heyday Redfern was possibly the best known fashion house in the world with a **clientele** that **included Queen Victoria** and her daughters, Lily Langtry, **Empresses of Germany and Russia** – and the **wealthy socialites of Europe and America**.

The influential Institut Français de la Mode places John Redfern firmly in the forefront of fashion:

*"The legacy of John Redfern may actually define clothing in the 20th Century. The intellectual lineage of Redfern is monumental and exemplary of the entire history of 20th century clothing. John Redfern mentored Charles Poynter Redfern who, in turn, mentored Robert Piguet, who mentored **Christian Dior** – who led the line to **Yves Saint Laurent**".*



The V&A museums fashion department in London has a fine collection of John Redfern and Sons garments including the above Riding Habit jacket designed and made in 1885-1886 for May Primrose Littledale. The Redfern Collection is an important historical link between the V&A and the Isle of Wight's industrial and design heritage.

WHY THE COLUMBINE BUILDING, EAST COWES?



Columbine hanger at Venture Quays

Photo: Ronald Saunders via CC BY-SA 2.0

The Columbine Shed has been the home of many an innovative idea over the years. Built in 1935 by Saunders Roe who manufactured sea planes it is also where the Hovercraft was designed and built. The site, having been redundant since the end of 2002, was sold to the South East England Development Agency by GKN Aerospace in 2004. The Union Jack, said to be the largest in the world, was painted in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's silver jubilee. The Columbine building provides a unique existing site and exterior apron at 45,552 sq ft with an eaves height of 12m & 12m x 24m access doors, two internal overhead cranes with lifting capacity of 16 tonnes - perfect for moving large scale artwork/sculpture/historic objects etc. It is an industrial building like Bankside Power station which became the Tate Modern now one of the most visited galleries in the World.

The majority of the infrastructure already exists or is in the process of being part of an overall regeneration plan, therefore costs are reduced and can be utilised solely for redevelopment rather than requiring a huge budget to build from scratch. This is a magnificent industrial waterfront site and a vast space which is ideal for housing a gallery/museum and perfect for multi-disciplinary art, design, performance, educational, leisure and cultural uses celebrating innovation.

The Columbine Building with its iconic Union Jack doors that welcomes visitors to the island; and is a homecoming symbol to locals, is part of a development site which includes Albany green, Maresfield Road and the adjacent Barracks. The Barracks have been identified in a recent planning application as being ideal for an eatery, hotel, bar and restaurant. However these Barracks; known as the Queens or Victoria Barracks could be incorporated into a wider development if a larger museum site was required and linked to a landmark building by a glass overhead walkway.

With this in mind the whole site is a very exciting project for a cultural/leisure experience and would be of interest to multiple investors. It has great potential for local job creation, training and attracting new businesses to East Cowes.

The **V&A East Cowes** site would have the potential to add to, and benefit from the existing footfall of Osborne house which is one of the most visited heritage sites in the UK. It would be part of future growth linking to existing innovation sites that would generate a significant and sustainable, economical benefit to not only East Cowes and the Medina valley but the Island as a whole.



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Queen's or Victoria... by John M. - geograph.org.uk/p4356245

IS THE COLUMBINE BUILDING AT RISK

Unfortunately we believe it is. Contrary to popular belief the iconic Columbine (Union Jack) shed, Venture Quays, East Cowes, nor its doors are listed – the last application being blocked by its owner the HCA (Homes & Communities Agency now HE Homes England).

An initial discussion as to whether that could change under council ownership did not receive a positive response - however our MP recently stated in conversation to us that he would potentially be in support of the building being listed.

We understand that the IWC will offer Wight Shipyard a 5 year lease; and as stated earlier in our proposal we fully support the building being used for industrial purposes – however we believe that in the long term this site is at risk of being lost to additional housing for the following reasons:

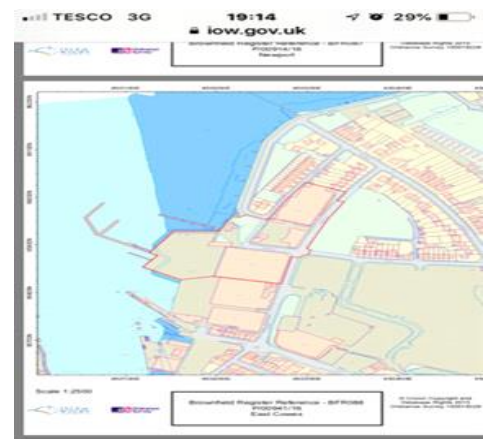
In 2014/15 the Venture Quays Site was added to the SHLAA Register (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) for 293 properties.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Five Year Land Supply April 2015 update (p.27)

	0-5 years					6-10 years					11+ years		Total
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	
N38 - land at Pyle Street/South Street											69		69
N48 - Pan Meadows aka Bluebell Meadows	40	40	40	40	40	40	50	50	50	50	32	4	476
N52 - Trafalgar Car Sales				0		21							21
No6c - Concrete Products, Westminster Lane			6	17									23
N53 - 11-11d Lower St.James Street		0		10									10
N54 - A B Cookes, Little London			0		21								21
LDF605 - Treeside and Medina	3	10	10										23
LDF630 - Polars Care Home (c2 and c3 accommodation)		20	20	3									43
C20 - Kingston (Hawthorn Meadows)	25	25	25	25	25	23	20	20	28	31			247
C38 - Venture Quays				2	32	35	45	55	60	64	0	0	293
C38a - (Victoria Walk)	20	9											29
C38b - land at Esplanade, Albany Road and Maresfield Road		0		12									12
C38c land between Castle Street and Church Path fronting Old Road		0		49									49

Whilst the identification of potential housing sites, in the SHLAA does not state or imply that the council would necessarily grant planning permission for residential development more worrying was our identification of the site on p. 21 of the Brownfield sites register (Part 1) during the Island Plan Draft Consultation process.

Local planning authorities must include sites that have been assessed against relevant criteria and are considered to be appropriate to enter in Part 1 of the brownfield land registers:



1) **The criteria referred to** in paragraph (1)(b) of regulation 3 are, in relation to each parcel of land —

- the land has an area of at least 0.25 hectares or is capable of supporting at least 5 dwellings;
- the land is suitable for residential development;
- the land is available for residential development; and
- residential development of the land is achievable **(in the opinion of the local planning authority, the development is likely to take place within 15 years of the entry date)**

Also P4 (HA113*) Land at Red Funnel East Cowes of the Allocated Site for proposed housing has identified the hole of the Red Funnel site for housing rather than specifically the area that has been allocated planning permission (<https://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2981-Clarification-Addendum-23.01.19.pdf>). This could potentially put the whole of Venture Quays site at risk of redevelopment in the long term future (+15 years).

